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UNPUBLISHED WAR LETTERS BY GENERALS GRANT AND HALLECK.

I.

RECENT discussions have aroused wide-spread interest in the question of the real relations which existed between Generals Grant and Halleck during the war. The controversy has been precipitated by the acknowledged friends of Grant. These rest their whole case upon the reports which General Halleck felt obliged to send to Washington, in regard to General Grant, immediately after the fall of Fort Donelson. The friends of General Halleck are understood to take the ground that to have done anything less than he did do, would have been a grave neglect of duty; that immediately afterward, instead of seeking to make trouble for General Grant, he interfered actively to save him from trouble; and that their relations were very friendly subsequently, and throughout the war. Friends of General Halleck are known to hold, further, that General Grant's final belief that General Halleck had been unfriendly to him at that time was created by subordinates, who, for purposes of their own, distorted the contents of the official records. It is still further claimed by them that no true friend of General Grant can contemplate with pleasure a discussion which, if continued, must and should result in establishing the exact facts of the whole situation during the ten days following the fall of Donelson.

The letter books which contain the originals of the private correspondence which passed between these two generals during the war have been examined by a communicator of the **NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW**. The cordial relations which existed between these officers appear throughout the volumes in many direct utterances, while nothing is found, after the cloud that fell at Donelson was dispelled, to show the least jar between them in the course of a necessarily voluminous correspondence extending over three years and a half. One or two brief extracts from the

letters herewith presented have had a limited circulation before, but with these exceptions the subjoined compilation is new.

II.

When General Grant was still restive under his anomalous position of "Second in Command" after Shiloh, General Halleck wrote him:

HALLECK TO GRANT.

"MONTEREY, Miss., *May* 12, 1862.

. . . "I am very much surprised, general, that you should find any cause of complaint in the recent assignments of commands. You have precisely the position to which your rank entitles you. Had I given you the right wing, or reserve only, it would have been a reduction rather than increase of command, and I could not give you both without placing you in the position you now occupy.

"You certainly will not suspect me of any intention to injure your feelings or reputation, or to do you any injustice; if so, you will eventually change your mind on this subject. For the last three months I have done everything in my power to ward off the attacks which were made upon you. If you believe me your friend you will not require explanation; if not, explanations on my part would be of little avail."

Fifteen months later, the correspondence shows the existence of most cordial relations. The following letter from General Halleck is interesting in the friendliness of its address, and in the wish, expressed at its close, to be back with Grant in the field. General Meade's friends will read it with much pleasure. It further shows that Halleck suggested the letter from Grant, in which he so cordially recommended Sherman and McPherson for promotion, while, at the same time, Grant's warm friendship for these comrades shines out in every line of his compliance with Halleck's wish :

III.

"HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY, }
"WASHINGTON, D. C., *July* 11, 1863. }

"MAJOR-GENERAL GRANT, *Vicksburg, Miss.*

"*My dear General:* General George C. Meade has been appointed a brigadier-general in the regular army, at the same time that you were made a major-general. There is still one vacant brigadier-generalcy, and I hope that Harney, Anderson and Cooke will soon be retired, making three more vacancies.

"The most prominent persons, as candidates for brigadier-general in the regular army, are W. T. Sherman, McPherson, G. H. Thomas, Sedgwick and Hancock. I am of opinion that Sherman and McPherson have rendered the best service, and should come in first. If you think so, write an official letter to

that effect, urging their appointment to the first vacancies. State their services pretty fully, and mention the battles they have been in under your command. The feeling is very strong here in favor of your generals.

"We are anxiously waiting to hear of the fall of Port Hudson, and the entire opening of the Mississippi River. The President will then issue a general order congratulating the armies of the East and West on their recent victories.

"This consideration has prevented me from issuing one myself for your army. I preferred that it should come from the President.

"Meade has thus far proved an excellent general, the only one, in fact, who has ever fought the Army of the Potomac well. He seems the right man in the right place. Hooker was more than a failure. Had he remained in command he would have lost the army and the Capitol.

"Give my kindest regards to my old friends among your officers. I sincerely wish I was with you again in the West. I am utterly sick of this political hell.

"Yours truly

"H. W. HALLECK."

IV.

Upon receiving the above, General Grant promptly wrote President Lincoln the following cordial and generous letter :

GRANT TO LINCOLN.

"HEAD-QUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF TENNESSEE, }
"VICKSBURG, MISS., July 22, 1863. }

"HIS EXCELLENCY, A. LINCOLN,

"*President of the United States,*

"Washington, D. C.:

"I would most respectfully but urgently recommend the promotion of Major-General W. T. Sherman, now commanding the Fifteenth Army Corps, and Major-General J. B. McPherson, commanding the Seventeenth Army Corps, to the position of brigadier-general in the regular army. The first reason for this is their great fitness for any command it may ever become necessary to intrust to them. Second, their great purity of character and disinterestedness in anything except the faithful performance of their duty, and the success of every one engaged in the great battle for the preservation of the Union. Third, they have honorably won this distinction upon many well fought battle-fields. I will only mention some of his services while serving under my command.

[After setting forth the services of each, and at every stage awarding high praise, General Grant closes with respect to General Sherman as follows:]

"The siege of Vicksburg, the last capture of Jackson, and the dispersion of Johnston's army entitle General Sherman to more credit than it usually falls to the lot of one man to earn.

In closing the account of General McPherson's services, the letter continues :

"In the assault of the 22d May on the fortifications of Vicksburg, and during the entire siege, General McPherson and his command won unfading laurels. He is one of our ablest engineers and most skillful generals.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"U. S. GRANT, *Major-General.*"

V.

Three weeks later, General Grant, in the midst of a long letter to General Halleck, on official business, turned aside from the thread of the letter to write:

GRANT TO HALLECK.

"VICKSBURG, Miss., Aug. 11, 1863.

. . . "I feel under many obligations to you, general, for the interest you have ever taken in my welfare, and that of the army I have the honor to command. I will do the best I know how to satisfy you that your confidence has not been misplaced." . . .

VI.

A few weeks later Halleck was thus privately defending Grant to Secretary Stanton :

HALLECK TO STANTON.

"WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 15, 1863.

. . . "It has been alleged, and the allegation has been widely circulated by the press, that General Grant, in the conduct of his campaign, positively disobeyed the instructions of his superiors. It is hardly necessary to remark that General Grant never disobeyed an order or instruction, but always carried out, to the best of his ability, every wish or suggestion made to him by the Government; moreover, he has never complained that the Government did not furnish him all the means and assistance in its power to facilitate the execution of any plan which he saw fit to adopt."

VII.

When the war closed, Halleck is found prompt to extend, and Grant prompt to accept, the hospitality of the former's home. The following telegrams tell of the incident :

STANTON TO HALLECK.

"WASHINGTON, May 17, 9 P.M., 1865.

"MAJOR-GENERAL HALLECK : General Grant is here with his wife and is sick. It is not safe for him to be at the hotel, and he is reluctant to go into a private family. He would go into your house for a while, if agreeable to you. Will you write him to do so while your family are absent ?

"E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*"

VIII.

HALLECK TO GRANT.

"RICHMOND, VA., *May*, 1865."LIEUT.-GENERAL GRANT, *Washington* :

"There are two servants, and most of the furniture and bedding in the house I occupied in Georgetown. I suggest that while your wife is with you you move right in and make yourself comfortable. My family will not again occupy it, and I do not require the furniture here, at least for the present. During the hot weather you can make yourself much more comfortable there than in Washington.

"H. W. HALLECK, *Major-General*."

IX.

GRANT TO HALLECK.

"WASHINGTON, *May* 18, 3 P.M., 1865.

"MAJOR-GENERAL HALLECK: Your very kind dispatch placing your house at Mrs. Grant's disposal during her stay is received. I have not seen Mrs. Grant, but I know that she will be delighted to get out of the hotel for the few weeks she remains here.

"U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General*."

In the Halleck collection is Grant's first private report about General McClelland, also indicating the early opinion of Admiral Porter about this subject :

X.

GRANT TO HALLECK.

"MEMPHIS, TENN., *January* 20, 1863.

... "I would respectfully ask if it would not be policy to combine the four departments in the West under one commander. As I am the senior department commander in the West, I will state that I have no desire whatever for such combined command, but would prefer the command I now have to any other that can be given.

"I regard it as my duty to state that I found there was not sufficient confidence felt in General McClelland as a commander, either by the army or navy, to insure his success. Of course all would co-operate to the best of their ability, but still with a distrust.

"This is a matter I made no inquiries about, but it was forced upon me. As it is my intention to command in person, unless otherwise directed, there is no special necessity of mentioning this matter, but I want you to know that others besides myself agree in the necessity of the course I had already determined upon pursuing.

"Admiral Porter told me that he had written freely to the Secretary of the Navy on this subject, with the request that what he said might be shown to the Secretary of War. . . .

"Very respectfully,

"U. S. GRANT, *Major-General, Commanding*."

The extremes of opinion about General Rosecrans appear in three letters, one written in 1862, and the others two years later. The third letter from General Grant expresses a decided opinion of Generals Curtis, Crocker and Sheridan :

XI.

"CORINTH, *August 9, 1862.*

. . . "I am anxious to keep the whole of the Army of the Mississippi together, and under the command of Brigadier-General Rosecrans, ready for any emergency, either to move upon any force that may threaten my front, or to reinforce General Buell. Having so many major-generals to provide commands for, this may be difficult. I regret that General Rosecrans has not got rank equal to his merit to make this easy." . . .

XII.

"CITY POINT, VA., *November 30, 1864.*

"I have just dispatched to you requesting that the Department of 'the Northwest,' Missouri and Kansas, be erected into a military division, and that General Pope be assigned to the command. I think it is highly essential that the territory embraced in those three departments should all be under one head. The importance of this change is much increased because of the inefficiency of two of the commanders of departments named, one of whom, I suppose, cannot well be removed. I do, however, think it of very great importance that General Rosecrans should be removed.

"There is no fault with General Canby that induces me to recommend a curtailment of his command, but being at such a distance from Missouri, he cannot direct affairs there as well as it can be done from Washington.

"I wish you would lay this matter before the Secretary of War and urge that the change be immediately made. With Pope in command we secure at least two advantages we have not heretofore had, namely, subordination and intelligence of administration."

XIII.

"CITY POINT, VA., *June 24, 1864.*

"Your letter stating that Generals Rosecrans and Curtis are calling for more troops is received. I am satisfied you would hear the same call if they were stationed in Maine. The fact is the two departments should be merged into one, and some officer, who does not govern so largely through a secret police system as Rosecrans does, put in command. I do think the best interests of the service demands that Rosecrans should be removed and some one else placed in that command. It makes but little difference who you assign, it would be an improvement. I had suspected wrong management on the Mississippi River, but believed Washburne and Slocum would purify matters, so far as their commands and their powers go. Have they not done so?

"You ask if the resignation of General Crocker should be accepted, and if he is qualified for the command of New Mexico. Crocker and Sheridan, I think, were the best division commanders I have ever known. Either of them are

qualified for any command. I would say, by all means retain General Crocker in the service, and send him to New Mexico. The only available major-general I can think of to take the Department of the Missouri, if the President will consent to the change, and I hope he will, is N. J. T. Dana."

Some letters about General C. S. Hamilton set forth General Grant's sharp views of an officer's duty, and incidentally express opinions of Generals McPherson and Hurlburt.

XIV.

"BEFORE VICKSBURG, *March 24, 1863.*

"I am led to believe, and think there is no doubt of the fact, that Major-General C. S. Hamilton is making indirect efforts to get General McPherson removed from the command of his army corps and to get the command himself. If this is so I wish to enter my solemn protest.

"There is no comparison between the two as to their fitness for such a command.

"McPherson from his activity, good sense, winning manners and efforts to harmonize all parts of his command toward each other, and preserve the same harmony toward all parts of this army, has made him the favorite with his men and officers, and one of the most suitable corps commanders probably in any service. General Hamilton lacks these qualifications. As a soldier I have no fault to find with him further than his natural jealous disposition which influences his military conduct and acts prejudicially upon the service.

"I inclose with this some correspondence between Generals Hurlburt and Hamilton, and which forms part of the ground upon which I have felt it a duty to order the latter to the front, and show partially the justness of what I here say of him.

"I would respectfully ask to have this laid before the President."

XV.

GRANT TO L. THOMAS, ADJUTANT-GENERAL.

"BEFORE VICKSBURG, *March 28, 1863.*

"Inclosed with this I send you the resignation of Major-General C. S. Hamilton, out of form mostly, giving the reason for tendering it.

"It is due that I should state that I have approved this resignation for the following reasons: I saw by the correspondence of the two generals that General Hamilton and General Hurlburt could not get along together. For this reason I relieved the former from duty in the District of West Tennessee and ordered him here. Commanders having been assigned to corps by the President I had nothing larger in the field to give General Hamilton than a division. This he refused to accept.

"General Hamilton being a capable officer, I gave him the choice between taking his old position under General Hurlburt, a division in the field, the command of the District of Eastern Arkansas, or to be relieved from duty in this department and ordered to report to Washington for orders. He accepted

the latter, with the request that his resignation be forwarded. I think in justice to the service his resignation should be accepted. The officer who shows that he expects a command fixed up for his express benefit, in my opinion becomes a beneficiary instead of what he should be, a support to the Government. The proposition which General Hamilton said he could accept were first, a division of General Hurlburt's command, in a certain way, and he to be independent of the latter; the other that I take two divisions of the army in the field and give him independent of army corps commanders. This I could not do without manifest injury to the service."

XVI.

A letter in regard to the use of colored troops has points of interest.

GRANT TO HALLECK.

"MILIKENS BEND, La., *April 19, 1863.*

... "At least three of my army corps commanders take hold of the new policy of arming the negroes and using them against the rebels with a will. They at least are so much of soldiers as to feel themselves under obligations to carry out a policy which they would not inaugurate, in the same good faith, and with the same zeal, as if it was of their own devising. You may rely on my carrying out any policy ordered by proper authority to the best of my ability."

It has often been claimed by writers about General Grant that he devised the brilliant plan for opening the Tennessee River below Chattanooga, which relieved the army of the Cumberland.

In the following letter of General Grant, he writes that, on his arrival he found General Thomas ready to execute this plan which had, been already prepared. It will be remembered by all familiar with the reports of the battles about Chattanooga, that General Thomas, in turn, reported that the plan had really been prepared under General Rosecrans before the latter was relieved by General Thomas :

XVII.

"CHATTANOOGA, TENN., *October 26, 1863.*

"I arrived there in the night of the 23d inst., after a ride on horseback of fifty miles from Bridgeport, over the worst roads it is possible to conceive of, and through a continuous drenching rain. It is now clear, and so long as it continues so it is barely possible to supply this army from its present base. . . .

"General Thomas had also set on foot before my arrival a plan for getting possession of the river from a point below Lookout Mountain to Bridgeport. If successful, and I think it will be, the question of supplies will be fully settled." . . .

General Grant's letters increased in interest after he assumed

command at the East. This one about General Butler is interesting:

XVIII.

"CITY POINT VA., *July 1, 1864.*

"Mr Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, has just returned. He informs me that he called attention to the necessity of sending General Butler to another field of duty. Whilst I have no difficulty with General Butler, finding him always clear in his conception of orders, and prompt to obey, yet there is a want of knowledge how to execute, and particularly a prejudice against him as a commander, that operates against his usefulness. I have feared that it might become necessary to separate him and General Smith. The latter is really one of the most efficient officers in the service, readiest in expedients and most skillful in the management of troops in action. I would dislike removing him from his present command unless it was to increase it, but, as I say, may have it to do yet, if General Butler remains.

"As an administrative officer General Butler has no superior. In taking charge of a department where there are no great battles to be fought, but a dissatisfied element to control, no one could manage it better than he. If a command could be cut out, such as Mr. Dana proposed, namely, Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana, or if the departments of the Missouri, Kansas, and the States of Illinois and Indiana could be merged together, and General Butler put over it, I believe the good of the service would be subserved.

"I regret the necessity of asking for a change in commanders here, but General Butler not being a soldier of education and experience, is in the hands of his subordinates in the execution of all operations military. I would feel strengthened with Smith, Franklin, or J. J. Reynolds commanding the right wing of this army. At the same time, as I have here stated, General Butler has always been prompt in his obedience to orders, with me, and clear in his understanding of them. I would not, therefore, be willing to recommend his retirement.

"I send this by mail for consideration, but will telegraph if I think it absolutely necessary to make a change."

A note about a request from Mrs. General McClellan shows the kindly side of Grant:

XIX.

"CITY POINT, VA., *December 26, 1864.*

"I am just in receipt of a letter from General G. B. McClellan, saying that he purposes visiting Europe soon, with his family, and that Mrs. McClellan desires to see her father before starting, and requests a leave of absence for Colonel Marcy that this desire may be gratified. I do not know the special duty Colonel Marcy may be on at this time, and do not therefore wish to order the leave granted lest it may interfere with important duties. If not inconsistent with public service, however, I wish this leave to be granted from Washington. Colonel Marcy, I believe, is in Memphis, Tenn., at this time."

The dispatch, below, indicates how closely General Grant looked after details :

XX.

GRANT TO MAJOR-GENERAL A. E. HITCHCOCK.

[*Telegram.*] "CITY POINT, VA., 10:30 P.M., *February 16, 1865.*

"I see it stated in the papers, that where some prisoners in the West were paroled to be sent forward for exchange, those who preferred Northern prisons to a return to the rebel service, were invited to step to the front. I think this wrong. Those who do not wish to go back are the ones whom it is most desirable to exchange. If they do not wish to serve in the rebel army, they can return to us after exchange and avoid it."

The following has some additional views on the questions which daily arose in the exchange of prisoners :

XXI.

GRANT TO HALLECK.

"CITY POINT, VA., *February 18, 1865.*

"Your communication of the 15th inst. with inclosure, calling my attention to the fact that advantage is being taken by General Beall, Confederate agent, of the recent agreement between Judge Ould and myself, to supply rebel prisoners with new uniforms and blankets, is received. The arrangement for the relief of prisoners of war was made at a time when exchanges could not be made, and under it I see no way to prevent rebel prisoners from being clothed. Having, however, a very large excess of prisoners over the enemy, we can, in making exchanges, select those who have not been furnished with new clothing or blankets. By this means but a very limited number of rebel soldiers will be returned with new uniforms. Should it become necessary, prisoners for exchange can be required to turn their blankets over to their comrades who remain.

"Please give orders to General Hoffman accordingly."

This about General Gilmore will be read with surprise by the friends of that officer :

XXII.

GRANT TO STANTON.

"CITY POINT, VA., *February 26, 1865.*

"I regretted greatly when I learned that General Gilmore had been assigned to the command of the Department of the South. He probably will be a suitable officer to have the general superintendence of the fortifications on the sea-coast. But, on that duty, he should be required to have all his requisitions approved by General Delafield or he will expend too much.

"Foreseeing the fall of Charleston, I sent orders to General Gilmore, in

advance of hearing of the events, to occupy the necessary points on the coast for us to hold, with minimum garrisons, and send the balance of his forces to the Cape Fear River, and to send all white troops, leaving the colored ones where they have been raised and where their families are. Before he received that order I suppose he sent a letter calling for from 4,000 to 5,000 more troops, 1,000 mounted men, with which he expects, by uniting the civil with the military, to feed and foster the Union sentiment in Georgia. I feel confident that, with Terry in command of that department, instead of wanting an addition to his force, he will spare 1,000 men to be used elsewhere, and the balance will be much more economically supported and usefully employed. He will administer the affairs of his department with sense and judgment, and will not talk about expeditions and conquests where there is no enemy to oppose him. He will also prove a most excellent man to organize colored troops."

The two letters which follow are of great interest. In the first, which is not new, General Grant suggests the abandonment of all the northern lines to Richmond, and the opening from the coast of a base as far south as Raleigh. General Halleck's reply, which is new, in addition to the general discussion of the questions, contains many facts in regard to the real condition of the army of the Potomac, and generally of the Eastern armies, with respect to their strength for offensive purposes, which were wholly unknown at the time, and which would have startled the country had they then come to light :

XXIII.

GRANT TO HALLECK.

(Confidential.)

"NASHVILLE, TENN., *January 19, 1864.*"MAJOR-GENERAL H. W. HALLECK, *Washington, D. C. :*

"I would respectfully suggest whether an abandonment of all previously attempted lines to Richmond is not advisable, and in lieu of these, one to be taken further south. I would suggest Raleigh, N. C., as the objective point, and Suffolk as the starting point. Raleigh once secured, I would make Newberne the base of supplies until Wilmington is secured. A moving force of sixty thousand men would probably be required to start on such an expedition. This force would not have to be increased unless Lee should withdraw from his present position. In that case the necessity for so large a force on the Potomac would not exist. A force moving from Suffolk would destroy, first, all the roads about Weldon, or even as far north as Hicksford. From Weldon to Raleigh they would scarcely meet with serious opposition. Once there, the most interior line of railway still left to the enemy—in fact, the only one they would then have—would be so threatened as to force him to use a large portion of his army in guarding it. This would virtually force an evacuation of Virginia, and indirectly of East Tennessee. It would throw our armies into new

fields, where they could partially live upon the country, and would reduce the stores of the enemy. It would cause thousands of North Carolina troops to desert and return to their homes. It would give us possession of many negroes who are now indirectly aiding the rebellion. It would draw the enemy from campaigns of their own choosing, and for which they are prepared, to new lines of operations never expected to become necessary. It would effectually blockade Wilmington, the port now of more value to the enemy than all the balance of their sea coast. It would enable operations to commence at once by removing the war to a more southern climate instead of months of inactivity in winter quarters. Other advantages might be cited, which would be likely to grow out of this plan, but these are enough. From your better opportunities of studying the country and the armies, that would be involved in this plan, you will be better able to judge of the practicability of it than I possibly can.

"I have written this in accordance with what I understood to be an invitation from you to express my views about military operations, and not to insist that any plan of mine should be carried out. Whatever course is agreed upon, I shall always believe is at least intended for the best, and until fully tested will hope to have it prove so.

"U. S. GRANT, *Major-General.*"

XXIV.

HALLECK TO GRANT.

(Confidential.)

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 17, 1864.*

"LIEUT.-GENERAL U. S. GRANT, *Nashville, Tenn. :*

"GENERAL: Your letter of the 12th inst. is just received. I fully concur with you in regard to the present condition of affairs in East Tennessee. It certainly is very much to be regretted that the fatal mistake of General Burnside has permitted Longstreet's army to winter in Tennessee. It is due to yourself that a full report of the matter should be placed on file so that the responsibility may rest where it properly belongs.

"The condition of affairs in East Tennessee, and the uncertainty of General Bank's operations in Texas and Louisiana, have caused me to delay answering your former communications in regard to operations of the next campaign. In one of these, you suggest whether it might not be well not to attempt anything more against Richmond, and send a column of sixty thousand men into North Carolina.

"In the first place, I have never considered Richmond as the necessary objective point of the Army of the Potomac: that point is *Lee's army*. I have never supposed that Richmond could be taken till Lee's army was defeated or driven away. It was one of Napoleon's maxims that an army covering a capital must be destroyed before attempting to capture or occupy that capital. And now how can we best defeat Lee's army; by attacking it between here and Richmond, on our shortest line of supplies and in such a position that we can combine our whole force, or by a longer line and with a force diminished by the troops required to cover Washington and Maryland?

"The movement through North Carolina, alluded to by you, and also one from Port Royal on Savannah and into Georgia, have been several times suggested here and pretty fully discussed by military men. It is conceded, by those suggesting these expeditions, that neither of them can be safely undertaken with a less force than that estimated by you, viz., sixty thousand effective men. Some require a still larger force.

"If we admit the advantage of either of these plans, the question immediately arises, Where can we get the requisite number of troops? There is evidently a general public misconception of the strength of our army in Virginia and about Washington. Perhaps it is good policy to encourage this public error. The entire effective force in the fortifications about Washington, and employed in guarding the public buildings and stores, the aqueduct, and railroads, does not exceed eighteen thousand men. We have a few thousand more in the convalescent and distribution camps, and in the cavalry and artillery depots; but these mostly fragments of organizations temporarily here for equipment and distribution, and could contribute very little to the defense of the place. This force is, therefore, less than one-half of what General McClellan and several boards of officers recommend as the permanent garrison. Considering the political importance of Washington and the immense amount of military stores here, it would be exceedingly hazardous to reduce it still further.

"The effective force of the army of the Potomac is only about seventy thousand. General Meade retreated before Lee with a very much larger force, and does not now deem himself strong enough to attack Lee's present army. Suppose we were to send thirty thousand men from that army to North Carolina, would not Lee be able to make another invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania? But it may be said that, by operating in North Carolina, we would compel Lee to move his army there. I do not think so. Uncover Washington and the Potomac River, and all the forces which Lee can collect will be moved North, and the popular sentiment will compel the Government to bring back the army in North Carolina to defend Washington, Baltimore, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia. I think Lee would to-morrow exchange Richmond and Raleigh and Wilmington for the possession of either of the afore-mentioned cities.

"But suppose it were practicable to send thirty thousand men from Meade's army to North Carolina, where shall he get the other thirty thousand? We have there now barely enough to hold the points which it is necessary to occupy in order to prevent contraband trade. Very few of these would be available for the field. Maryland is almost entirely stripped of troops, and the forces in West Virginia are barely sufficient to protect that part of the country from rebel raids. The only other resource is South Carolina.

"Generals Foster and Gillmore were both of opinion, at the commencement of operations against Charleston, that neither that place nor Savannah could be taken by a land force of less than 60,000 men. But the Navy Department was sanguine that the iron-clads could reduce Charleston if the army would disable Fort Sumter and the island batteries. A large land and naval force have been employed there for nearly a year without any important result. I had no faith

in the plan at first, and for months past have ineffectually urged that ten or fifteen thousand men from Gillmore's command be sent against Texas or Mobile. And now these troops are sent upon another expedition which, in my opinion, can produce no military result.

"I always have been, and am still opposed, to all of these isolated expeditions on the sea and gulf coasts. It is true that they greatly assist the navy in maintaining the blockade and preventing contraband trade, but I think the troops so employed would do more good if concentrated on some important line of military operations. We have given too much attention to cutting the toenails of our enemy instead of grasping his throat.

"You will perceive, from the facts stated above, that there are serious, if not insurmountable obstacles in the way of the proposed North Carolina expedition. Nevertheless, as it has much to recommend it, I shall submit it, with your remarks, to the consideration of the President and Secretary of War, as soon as troops enough return from furlough to attempt any important movement in this part of the theatre of war.

"Lee's army is by far the best in the rebel service, and I regard him as their ablest general. But little progress can be made here until that army is broken or defeated. There have been several good opportunities to do this, viz., at Antietam, at Chancellorsville, and at Williamsport, in the retreat from Gettysburg. I am also of opinion that General Meade could have succeeded recently at Mine Run, had he persevered in his attack.

"The overthrow of Lee's army being the object of operations here, the question arises, How can we best attain it? If we fight that army with our communications open to Washington so as to cover this place and Maryland, we can concentrate upon it nearly all of our forces on this frontier; but if we operate by North Carolina or the Peninsula, we must act with a divided army, and on exterior lines, while Lee, with a short interior line can concentrate his entire force upon either fragment.

"And yet, if we had troops enough to secure our position here, and at the same time to operate with advantage on Raleigh or Richmond, I would not hesitate to do so, at least for a winter or spring campaign. But our numbers are not sufficient, in my opinion, to attempt this, at least for the present. Troops sent south of James River cannot be brought back in time to oppose Lee, should he attempt a movement north, which I am satisfied would be his best policy.

"Our main efforts in the next campaign should unquestionably be made against the armies of Lee and Johnston. But by what particular lines we shall operate cannot be positively determined until the affairs of East Tennessee are settled, and we can know more nearly what force can be given to the Army of the Potomac. In the mean time it will be well to compare views and opinions. The final decision of this question will probably depend, under the President, upon yourself.

"It may be said that, if General McClellan failed to take Richmond by the Peninsula route, so also have Generals Burnside, Hooker and Meade failed to accomplish that object by the shorter and more direct route. This is all very true, but no argument can be deduced from the bare fact in favor of either plan

of operations. General McClellan had so large an army in the spring of 1862 that possibly he was justified in directing his forces and adopting exterior lines of operations. If he had succeeded his plan would have been universally praised. He failed. And so also have Burnside, Hooker and Meade on an interior route; but their armies were far inferior in number to that which McClellan had two years ago. These facts in themselves prove nothing in favor of either route, and to decide the question we must recur to fundamental principles in regard to interior and exterior lines, objective points, covering armies, divided forces, etc., etc. These fundamental principles require, in my opinion, that all our available forces in the East should be concentrated against Lee's army. We cannot take Richmond (at least with any military advantage) and we cannot operate advantageously on any point from the Atlantic coast, till we destroy or disperse that army. And the nearer to Washington we can fight it the better for us. We can here, or between here and Richmond, concentrate against him more men than anywhere else. If we cannot defeat him here with our combined forces, we cannot hope to do so elsewhere with a divided army.

"I write to you plainly and frankly, for between us there should be no reserve or concealment of opinions. As before remarked, I presume that, under the authority of the President, the final decision of these questions will be referred to you. Nevertheless, I think you are entitled to have, and that it is my duty to frankly give, my individual opinion on the subject. It will no doubt be received for what it may be intrinsically worth. I can ask or expect nothing more.

"In regard to the operations of our Western armies, I fully concur in your views; but I think the condition of affairs in East Tennessee, and west of the Mississippi River, will require some modification in your plans, or at least will very much delay the operations of your proposed spring campaign. These however, are delays and changes which neither of us could anticipate."

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"H. W. HALLECK, *General-in-Chief*."